1665

> The Middle West seems to be waking up and the East is undoubtedly in a considerable state of excitement. But on the whole the President will do all he can to maintain peace and it will be extremely unwise to count with any certainty on the United States entering into the War.'[5]

As this letter shows, the situation in America was rapidly becoming impossible. The President was waiting for Germany to declare herself by some " overt act " which would serve as a pretext for resolving his perplexities. Meantime American shipping congestion grew worse, and important branches of commerce and industry were at a standstill. The President however was reluctant to take any action which would look as if he contemplated war.

Germany quickly showed that she was in no way deterred by Wilson's vague menace of further action from carrying out her policy of unrestricted sinking. *Germany's* Indeed, on the very day when the Presi- *indifference* dent was delivering his address to Con- *to American* gress, an American vessel, the *Housatonic*, *protests* was gunk ky a submarine, and it was followed to the bottom ten days later by the *Lyman M. Law.* But a more serious result, both to American merchants and to British imports, was the extent to which the German submarine threat kept United States vessels in harbour.

On s6th February, 1917, President Wilson appeared before Congress and asked its sanction for the arming of United States merchantmen. Diplo-

U.S.A. matic means of safeguarding American

The armed rights> he said> had broken down> and

" there may be no recourse but to an armed